The Community Resource Kit

Guidance for people setting up and running community organisations

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Te Tari Taiwhenua

Section 1

Getting started

Community and voluntary groups in NZ

Introduction

There are about 97,000 non-government organisations (NGOs) in New Zealand, from registered incorporated societies and charitable trusts to informal groups. Nearly half are in culture, sport and recreation, followed by social services (12 per cent) and religion (10 per cent).

Ninety per cent of New Zealand non-profit organisations rely solely on volunteer labour and the rest employ over 100,000 paid staff. For the size of its population, New Zealand has one of the largest non-profit sectors in the world, representing an industry of $NZ9.9 billion annually (Statistics NZ 2007).

Words used

'Community groups' or 'NGO' (non-governmental organisation), 'not-for-profit' or 'non-profit organisations' can be sports clubs, social service organisations, social clubs, marae committees, environmental lobby groups and charitable trusts.

Community groups have five distinguishing features:

- they have some organisational structure
- they are 'non-profit'
- they are independent of government, although they might get funds from government
- they are self-governing, and
- they are non-compulsory.

Terms such as 'government', 'private', 'community and voluntary' and 'household' might not align with the kin-based structures of whānau, hapū and iwi or possibly to other ethnic groups in New Zealand. *Communities and Government Potential for Partnership:* Whakatāpū Whakaaro http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/publications/

Culture and values

Community sector organisations have distinguishing characteristics.

Community groups almost always:

- are values-focused and mission-focused with core beliefs reflected in their purpose, programmes and activities
- take into account ambiguous ownership with multiple interest groups and stakeholders
- are voluntary
- have group values consistent with the values of the individuals within the group
- are indirectly funded, and
- are interdependent.

Community groups and organisations also:

- are often flexible and innovative
- promote volunteer citizen participation
- contribute to building strong communities, and
- meet needs not met by government.

Historical background

Society in pre-European New Zealand was organised in well-defined structures of whānau and hapū. 'Participation by Māori, in Māori or iwi-based organisations, is not generally seen as a voluntary activity. It is a manifestation of a set of cultural obligations that are required to maintain cultural values and reflect priorities established at a group level.' www.ocvs.govt.nz.

European society maintained a distinction between 'government', 'private' (or market), 'community' and 'household' sectors. European settlement brought church-related community organisations, including in the late 19th century, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (1885), which lobbied for women's suffrage. National welfare, health and disability organisations founded at this time include The Jubilee Institute for the Blind, now the Royal New Zealand Foundation of the Blind, and the Plunket Society. These organisations entered into funding arrangements with government as separate institutions.

Voluntary welfare services continued to advocate for and provide services to the people they represented, funded by a mix of private donations, fundraising activities and government subsidies. The late 1930s to the early 1980s saw social and workplace reform and a broadening of New Zealand's social security system. Voluntary organisations continued to complement government services as government provided health and welfare services. Most state funding for community groups was done through a system of grants and subsidies not usually attached to specific services.

A number of prominent social support organisations, such as the New Zealand Playcentre Federation, Family Planning, Crippled Children Society, Intellectually Handicapped Children's Parents' Association (later IHC New Zealand) and the Cancer Society of New Zealand were established and received the bulk of government funding for community groups. In the late 20th century new local community groups and national organisations included a range of women's groups, providing support and consciousness-raising as well as some services. Other political and activist groups focused on the environment, nuclear testing, apartheid and sporting tours, domestic racism and sexism.

At a national level, the New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (NZFVWO) was established in 1969 and the New Zealand Council of Social Services (NZCOSS) in 1975. Both organisations continue to provide national leadership on common issues while retaining and extending links to local networks of community organisations involved in a wide range of social service provision and advocacy.

Māori community organisations

A number of cross-iwi movements, most aiming to promote Māori identity, were developed in response to European colonisation. These groups included Māori clubs, councils, welfare committees and wardens, youth and church groups. The Māori Women's Welfare League was established at a national level in 1951 and has been a significant community organisation ever since. The Māori Community Development Act 1962 established a range of Māori associations – the New Zealand Māori Council, district Māori councils, Māori committees and Māori wardens, statutory organisations with some delegated statutory powers, making a significant contribution to the Māori community sector.

The community-government relationship

The Community Sector Taskforce is an independent body of five tangata Tiriti and five tangata whenua community people. It was established in 2003 and mandated to continue the work developed by the joint community sector and government working parties (2000-2002) to develop the relationship between government and the sector http://www.cst.org.nz/ .

The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) was established in September 2003 to strengthen the relationship between government and the community sector. Its key functions are to provide cross-sectoral policy development and advice, and to act as a contact point for community, voluntary and tangata whenua organisations at the national level http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/ .

The Charities Commission was established in 2005 to provide greater accountability and transparency in the community and voluntary sector by registering and monitoring charities in accordance with the *Charities Act*. *The Commission* also provides support and education on good governance and management http://www.charities.govt.nz/ .

Community networks

Community groups rarely operate in isolation. Sometimes by working together, groups can reach their goals by sharing information and resources and developing networks. A strong, inclusive community sector includes local, regional, national, whānau, hapū and iwi.

Stages of development

Community groups go through stages of development. Many remain small and volunteer-based while others develop quickly into large and organisationally sophisticated groups.

Stage	Typical characteristics	Matters to consider
Starting out One person or a small group, passionate about a particular issue and wanting to do something	• often led by a visionary and/or strong, entrepreneurial person • high ideals – often not clear	• where does this fit with other things that are going on in the community? • clarification of/agreeing on purpose of the group
Becoming structured Small group committed to making something happen	• generally operates as a committee or collective • the work of the group is done by the group members (generally voluntarily) • minimal financial structures – often group member contributions, perhaps small grant, such as COGS	• what structure best suits the purpose? • getting organised • assigning roles • agreeing on what needs to be done (not just the 'high ideals') • establishing systems
Growing An organisation can outgrow its volunteer structure	• the group inevitably faces challenges • some members often do the bulk of the work, leading to resentment and tension • the loose, voluntary structure is replaced by a more formal, structured committee or board • a co-ordinator, administrator or chief executive may be employed to do the tasks delegated by the committee/board • applying for funding to support the organisation's increased operation.	• establishing good organisational processes • setting up governance, management and reporting structures • increased financial, legal and employment responsibilities maintaining external relationships.

Maturity Group is functioning well	• systems and structures are formalised • generally a separation of governance and management roles • employs staff • ongoing evaluation of the group's effectiveness and relevance.	• challenge of keeping relevant (or getting stale) • learning/reflective practice • avoiding a loss of passion • business management responsibilities – financial, employment, premises, assets, contract management, etc.
Completion Work is done or re-focus	• things change, either externally (in the community) or within the group to indicate that it is time to wind up • some groups may reinvent themselves with a different focus rather than winding up • others might limp on, resisting dissolution, although they could be increasingly irrelevant to the community.	• evaluation – at both group and personal levels • dealing with grief – some members might not want to finish • celebration • tidying up and moving on.

Getting started

You have an idea

Most projects start off as an idea for dealing with a particular issue in a community. The individual or group sees a need, finds that something they want is not available or discovers there are resources available that could be used by the community.

Do some research

- Check out the idea with friends and relations, people in the community and anyone who might be affected by the initiative.
- Who else is doing something about your issues, or something similar? Can you work with them rather than setting up another community group?
- Is your idea/issue identified in other community planning exercises? Check the Long-Term Plan of Auckland Council or Long-Term Council Community Plan of other Territorial Authorities as well as the Ministry of Social Development's Local Services Mapping (LSM) and the local authorities Community Outcomes Processes (COPs).
- Look at the statistics and demographics – do they support the need for a new service? http://www.stats.govt.nz/
- Check with local councils, central government agencies, iwi, hapū and other community networks and community leaders.

> Tip: Listen and take into account differing and opposing views – that's consultation. It's easy to find support for an idea you are passionate about, but don't be lured into a false sense of support because the people you know tell you to go for it!

Do some planning

Be clear about the five 'W's and an 'H':

- why you want to do something
- what you want to do
- where you plan to operate from and in which area of the community
- when you are going to do it
- who will be affected, who will be involved, who needs to know, and
- how you intend to make this happen — how your group will operate.

Set some ground rules, which might develop into a constitution. Consider which is the best legal structure to use. How realistic is it to set up and maintain a new community group?

Tip: Running community groups can be hard work, often with limited resources. Think very carefully before setting up a new group – it might be better to link with an existing group. Be realistic about what you can achieve – projects usually take more time, energy and money than you expect.

Where to go for more information

Online resources

1. **The Department of Internal Affairs –** www.dia.govt.nz – has information about local government services, funding and community advisory services.

2. **CommunityNet Aotearoa –** www.community.net.nz/ – Online news, guides and resources for and by clubs, trusts, hapū and Iwi. The How-to-Guides cover topics such as getting started, human resources, campaigning and advocacy and working with government agencies.

3. **Managing Well –** www.community.net.nz/communitycentre/managing-well/Default. htm – Resources and support to help set up or run a community organisation or project. (Also available for download from: www.familyservices.govt.nz/).

4. **Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) –** www.ocvs.govt.nz – A wide range of information and research relating to the community and voluntary sector in New Zealand – the 'Help and information for community groups' section has links.

5. **New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (NZFVWO) –** www. nzfvwo.org.nz – Information and resources developed by the NZFVWO and links to other key sector organisations and networks.

6. **SPARC Club Kit –** http://sparc.org.nz/en-nz/communities-and-clubs/ – The tips and resources in the Club Kit are aimed primarily at sports clubs, but they are useful to anyone creating and running any form of community group.

7. **Work and Income: Setting up and running a community project –** www.workandincome.govt.nz/community/setting-up-and-running-a-community-project. html – Information to help establish and run community projects to develop people's skills and improve job opportunities.

8. **Paul Bullen Management Alternatives for human services –** www.mapl.com.au – An Australian web-based tool kit developed mainly for small and medium-sized community organisations.

9. **Community Sector Taskforce –** http://cst.org.nz/ . Information about what's happening in the tangata whenua, community and voluntary sector.

10. **Community Outcomes –** www.communityoutcomes.govt.nz/ – Information about community outcomes and Long-term Council Community Plans (LTCCPs), as well as good-practice resources, tools and guidance for community outcomes processes.

11. **Community Central –** http://communitycentral.org.nz/ – An online space for people in tangata whenua, community and voluntary, public health and other organisations to work together, share and converse.

12. **Statistics New Zealand –** www.stats.govt.nz – As well as the Non-Profit Institutions Satellite Account, Statistics New Zealand has a lot of useful information for community groups, drawn from a wide range of statistics.